The Teleology of Trauma: How Haruki Murakami Shapes Narratives and their Methods in Creating and Understanding Trauma

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by

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Abstract

Haruki Murakami (1949-) is a contemporary Japanese author whose works present our world on the cusp of embracing another where cats and sheep men can talk, where woman disappear, and where wells are as deep as unconsciousness. However, the majority of his works have a common theme throughout – trauma. The goal of this thesis is to accurately describe the trauma that can be found within many of Murakami's works, but also to understand Murakami's literary project and narrative theory via trauma. By conducting a close reading (formal identification of genre, consideration of narrative structure and methods) and analysis (psychoanalytic study of character, comparative theories of trauma) of Murakami's works, I show the trauma that is presented through the genre of magical realism in various ways including creating a different way to examine magical realism as a genre, and how the narrative structural elements of the texts such as narrators, tense, time, and the organization of the stories and framed narratives allude to trauma. In my analysis I move to combine genre and narrative structure in how the texts present expectations for us as readers that are never or are partially fulfilled with narrative closure creating trauma affect for readers. Finally, I take genre, structure, and closure into account resulting in an understanding of how we as readers interpret Murakami and trauma via a hermeneutic evaluation of his works in how we understand meaning and truth but also the meaning and truth of trauma. In my conclusion I propose that the common theme of trauma doesn't just permeate the worlds and characters Murakami creates, but it also encapsulates how the narratives are told, how they end, and how we interpret them.

Keywords: Trauma, Narrative Theory, Haruki Murakami, Contemporary Japanese Fiction

Introduction

"There's no such thing as perfect writing, just like there's no such thing as perfect despair."

Haruki Murakami, Hear the Wind Sing[1]

The first words Murakami ever published are: "There is no such thing as perfect writing, just as there is no such thing as perfect despair" in his story *Hear the Wind Sing.* Haruki Murakami, born in 1949 in Kyoto Japan, has created an incredible and utterly fantastic collection of writing that manages to uniquely describe human experience. All of which, I believe, focus on a major theme – Trauma. Trauma is an incredibly deep and painful feeling that resonates with us long after the actual traumatic event. Murakami is able to paint an incredible picture with subtle phrasing, moving metaphors, and unique stories that are able to define and shape truth into what it is like to have trauma. Like his first sentence says, he doesn't write perfectly, nor does he describe despair perfectly, but he does write uniquely and write on unique despair.

I am looking at Haruki Murakami and trauma for several reasons. The first being that the affectual impact I as a casual reader of Murakami have had. The stories that Murakami writes has provoked mystery and overwhelming emotion as I try to unpack these stories, that often times have left me grasping for more. In reading his works, I have noticed that Murakami uses deep metaphor and powerful language in order to give life to the intimate parts of the human psyche and to describe our world in a magical way. However, often I have found subtle clues and metaphors that have led me to want to dig deeper, find the connections as if there is a way to put the asides and dialogues together to find the *actual* meaning of the work. Often times this is due to Murakami refusal to give full closure to his texts. While it is often impossible to give full

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[1] Murakami, H. (2015) *Hear the Wind Sing*, Page 3

closure, at whatever scale that may take, it is often the case that Murakami moves our focus away from the conflict at hand, and sheds light on other subjects. This refusal of closure, I believe, is what gives Murakami depth, and with his intricate writing he is able to leave readers longing for closure with ways to which one can interpret the work or try to find their own closure. This has led me to do a close study of one of his short stories – *UFO in Kushiro*, where I gained a different insight into Murakami – that he has these questions left unanswered in order to bring affect to readers is a very particular way. My hope going into this thesis was then to try to understand how this affect comes about, which has led me to trauma.

How do we unpack the complex narratives of Haruki Murakami? How can we understand the trauma that is felt by the characters in these various works? What is the trauma? How does trauma influence genre, narrative structure, closure, and how do they influence the trauma that is described? How does the teleological impact of narrative change the way we understand and interpret trauma? How is trauma shaped and created? What are its influences on a genre and narrative structure and closure? How do genre, narrative structure, and lack of closure shape how the narrative portrays trauma, and how trauma is interrelated to meaning and interpretation? The goal of this thesis is to try to understand the narratives that Murakami presents to readers and the way trauma is explicated.

Upon studying Murakami, one should note that Murakami studies are limited in the English-speaking world as Murakami himself is a Japanese author who writes in Japanese. In Japan, Murakami studies are vast, and often times it is only through those familiar with the Japanese language that an English-speaking person is able to think critically about Murakami (i.e. Matthew Carl Stretcher and Jay Rubin). Yet, there are some in the English-speaking part of the world who are deeply fascinated with Murakami studies, such as Virginia Yeung and

Jonathan Boulter. The most notable for this project is Jessica Manuel, who wrote a Master's thesis on Murakami and the unconscious, and has expanded it to many others, including myself through online courses and reading groups. Her insights into this thesis cannot be understated as it has helped me to foster ideas that have been so motivating and moving for me, not just as a student, but as a reader and fan of Murakami. I now want to be able to use what I have learned from her, and peers in the field of Murakami studies to further our understanding of Murakami. The importance of what my thesis is trying to show is not just to further Murakami studies, but also to put into practice theories about the genre of magical realism, and closure alongside narrative theory through direct application and analysis of the many works of Haruki Murakami.

To develop this thesis, I have used a methodology with which I initially pursued but was directly supported by Jonathan Boulter, a professor of English at Western University, in his work *Melancholy and the Archive*. In this work, he discusses an entire chapter on Murakami and states that he sees Murakami's literary project as being about violence. Not just in the sense that the works of Murakami are *about* violence, but that the works themselves *are violent.* I came to the same line of argument in stating that Murakami's literary project is about trauma; his works are stories about trauma, and that his stories *are traumatic* through his various complex and compelling narratives.

To do so, in the first chapter, I will define trauma, examine how genre is used within his narratives, their relation to trauma, both for the characters and the readers, and the expectations we gain from genre. The genre I want to focus on is magical realism as it is often times the one that Murakami is able to easily fit into, regardless of his own interpretations as the author. What I make clear is that magical realism and trauma are closely linked and that often times magical

realism is able to bring height to trauma and explicate it in such a way that readers, and even the characters, are able to intimately understand.

In the second chapter, I focus on narrative and narrative structure. I show that how Murakami's works are written, they often implicate trauma indirectly through fragmentation and doublings. These fragmentations carry also into how framed narratives within the text allow characters to share stories of trauma to each other. In having expectations about the text, often times defined by genre, we will be able to see how they are upheld or subverted through narrative structure, and how the texts are coded to create meaning through literary devices including symbols, metaphors, and allegories in order to drive a deeper illustration on how trauma is described.

Then, in chapter three, I move towards narrative closure of a text, and how a lack of closure can be indicative of trauma, but also in itself cause affectual trauma on the reader. By looking into how these texts create or disregard closure, I demonstrate how the lack of closure can be itself a type of trauma and what is the impact of it. I conduct a close reading of two of Murakami's texts, *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, in order to portray how what I have described in the first two chapters, play into the text and lead to a lack of closure while causing affectual discourse.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, by having this holistic groundwork for the narratives, I uncover how trauma influences how we as readers create the meaning of and in the novels of Haruki Murakami. In doing so I show a deeper connection between meaning and truth in relation to trauma. In moving through Murakami's texts, I plan on identifying the trauma in this way in order to better categorize and analyze these texts and how they are coded, but also as a way of

thinking about genre, narrative structure, and the hermeneutics in and of the texts to find a teleological function to trauma within narrative, and especially within Murakami.

I believe that Murakami is trying to explicate trauma through various means, consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly, in order to better understand the human being, the human condition, and the human psyche. I will be focusing on his works as holistically as possible, which includes over 14 novels, four short story collections, two nonfiction works, that have been translated into English, but my attention will be focusing on those works who have the most explicit usages of trauma. While I could go into every work and show that trauma that is there, that is not necessarily the point. The point is that Murakami is trying to connect readers to these stories by using the fantastic, allegory, repetition, fragmentation, lack of closure, and language that suggests deeper meaning in order to explicate to readers stories of trauma as well as the feeling of trauma.

Chapter 1 – Trauma and Genre

"This has got to be, patently, the most unbelievable, the most ridiculous story I have ever heard. Somehow coming from your mouth, it has the ring of truth…"
Haruki Murakami, A Wild Sheep Chase[2]

One of the most distinctive characteristics of Haruki Murakami's writing is that of his narratives' fantastic elements that are most commonly defined by the genre of magical realism. Magical realism creates a setting for which many of Murakami's characters can explore themselves, and often times this is because of a mindset that has given way to trauma. The relationship between these two narrative elements – genre and trauma – are large fragments of how one understands and comprehends his works. To begin to break apart genre and trauma, I want to make sure we have a clear understanding of trauma and magical realism to better justify the interpretation of them in order to clearly make distinctions in how Murakami uses and shapes them both in his works.

Let's start to unpack the term trauma by looking at one of the leading theorists on trauma narratives. Trauma, as defined by Cathy Caruth, is "an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena"[3]. This definition puts trauma in a narrative mode: event and response, cause and effect. Caruth leaves "other intrusive phenomena" vague in order to allow this definition to be used in different capacities. A key piece to understanding trauma is that it does not come about or is felt objectively, but *subjectively* based upon several factors. This subjectivity can even be seen in Caruth's definition; "an

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[2] Murakami, H. (1989) *A Wild Sheep Chase*, Page 146
[3] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 11

overwhelming experience"[4]. This, along with "other intrusive phenomena", allows for open interpretation as to what can be defined as trauma or as traumatic. In relation to magical realism, when trauma is represented in literature it can include elements of the fantastic.

Tzetan Todorov in his work, *The Fantastic,* explains what the fantastic is, and what are its characteristics. Todorov says:

> "The fantastic requires the fulfillment of three conditions. First, the text must oblige the reader to consider the world of the characters as a world of living persons and to hesitate between a natural or supernatural explanation of the events described. Second, this hesitation may also be experienced by a character; thus the reader's role is so to speak entrusted to a character, and at the same time the hesitation is represented, it becomes one of the themes of the work -- in the case of naive reading, the actual reader identifies himself with the character. Third, the reader must adopt a certain attitude with regard to the text: he will reject allegorical as well as "poetic" interpretations."[5]

The fantastic for Todorov is "that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event"[6] as it relates to the uncanny or the marvelous.

Magical realism, as a genre, is defined by Maggie Ann Bowers as "a term…referring to narrative art that presents extraordinary occurrences as an ordinary part of everyday reality"[7] and Wendy B. Farris writes that magical realism "combines realism and the fantastic so that the marvelous seems to grow organically within the ordinary, blurring the distinction between them"[8]. More closely, however, the genre is looking at magical elements in which they refer to "any extraordinary occurrence and particularly to anything spiritual or unaccountable by rational

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[4] Emphasis mine
[5] Todorov, T (1970) *The Fantastic,* Page 33
[6] Todorov, T (1970) *The Fantastic,* Page 25
[7] Bowers, M. (2004) *Magic(al) Realism,* Page 131
[8] Farris, W. (2004) *Ordinary Enchantments,* Page 1

science"[9]. The term of magical realism is also hard to pin since it is the "oxymorons describing the forced relationship of irreconcilable terms."[10]. Yet it is within this juxtaposition of mimetic description of our current reality and the fantastical or magical elements that occurs within the genre that shows the reality we should focus upon in relation to the fantastic. Farris defines five characteristics to magical realism; (1) the irreducible element – things that cannot be explained by science, and that the magical elements really *do* happen – (2) a phenomenal setting/world – a world that is described phenomenologically – (3) unsettling doubts, per Todorov's fantastic (4) the merging of different realms, and (5) disturbances to time, space, and identity. Before trying to see if Murakami fits these definitions of magical realism as Bowers and Farris put it, I want to explore the general relationship between magical realism and trauma. One may ask however if the two characteristics of Murakami that I have begun to describe – trauma and magical realism – are mutually exclusive, or if they are interconnected? I will suggest that the latter is clearly evident in my discussion of the connection between the genre and trauma.

Cathy Caruth in the introduction to *Unclaimed Experiences* begins with a Freudian analysis into the narrative of Tancred. She analyzes the text to represent it as being "evocatively represent in Freud's text the way that the experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknowing acts of the survivor and against his very will"[11]. Caruth also represents trauma as being unconscious[12] and being "a truth that…cannot fully [be] know[n]"[13]. Caruth even so far as says that "literature…is interested in the complex relation

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[9] Bowers, M. (2004) *Magic(al) Realism*, Page 20
[10] Bowers, M. (2004) *Magic(al) Realism*, Page 1
[11] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 2
[12] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 2
[13] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 3

between knowing and not knowing."[14]. Time, self, and the world are also at the foundation of the tension that is indicative of trauma to Caruth; "trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or a simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language." [15]. This pairs with the fifth characteristic of magical realism as defined by Farris; disruption to time, space and identity. Trauma "is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual's past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely not known in the first instance— returns to haunt the survivor later on."[16] Caruth's choice of words in saying that trauma *haunts*, as if it were a ghost, also suggests that the fantastic in the narratives of literature and in the lives of individuals who experience the trauma.

Trauma then, I want to argue, is linked together with the genre of magical realism between narrative, memory, the unconscious, time, self and its relation to the outside world, meaning and truth, and the fantastic. The narrative, or story is told to explicate trauma, and trauma is causational, thus if one wants to explain trauma, one must tell a narrative. Memory, since it is in the repetition of remembering the traumatic event that allows the trauma to continue. The unconscious, as it is often the things locked inside of us that cause us this harm and is where, for Freud and Caruth, the trauma occurs. Time, as it repeats the traumatic experiences. The self, as trauma is a subjective and an individual experience, but can be felt

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[14] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 3
[15] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 4
[16] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 4

communally, thus relating to the outside world. Meaning and truth, as trauma tries to fragment the mind of an experience, or of their own selves, and that trying to understand it by having a truth or a meaning allows one to overcome the trauma. And finally, the fantastic, as the tension between the supernatural and the natural. Yet, while these elements exist, how do they play out in Murakami's work and to what extent are the elements connected? The latter part of the question will continue throughout the rest of this thesis and will be addressed briefly continuing on as we try to see how Murakami's works are magical realist texts, what types of trauma come about because of magical realism, and how the elements of magical realism and trauma manifest.

I now want to show that a Murakami text can meet Farris' five characteristics of magical realism; the irreducible element, a phenomenal setting/world, unsettling doubts, the merging of different realms, and disturbances to time, space, and identity. To show this, I'm going to use two texts of Murakami to show that his texts do fit this definition; *Sputnik Sweetheart*, one of his less popular stories, and *Kafka on the Shore*, one of his most popular stories and that is arguably one of the most fantastic. In *Sputnik Sweetheart*, it is set in the phenomenal world of our own with references to locations such as Greece, Japan, and France, the use of modern technology such as a Macintosh PowerBook, and the intertextual references such as Joseph Conrad, the beatnik authors like Kerouac, and historical accounts as in the flights of Sputnik I and II, and Laika the dog who was on Sputnik II. There are irreducible elements throughout the text that allude to the fantastic – Miu's strange experience that caused her to be split and have white hair and the fact that Sumire disappeared, like smoke. Unsettling doubts come about towards the end of the novel with the return of Sumire, but without any explanation. The two realms that merge together is found within the language of Sumire's documents where she talks about "the other side", and alludes to there being an alternate reality. Finally, the disturbances to time, space, and identity

come about more so with identity (Miu) and with space (the other reality), time does not truly come up here other than the fact that the story is being told almost a year after the disappearance of Sumire, which causes us to wonder what that difference has on the narrator's ability to tell the story.

Next, *Kafka on the Shore* also fits these five characteristics. The phenomenal world – set in Japan, references to WWII, Japanese writings, and a Walkman. Irreducible element – fish falling from the sky, Nakata talking to cats, meeting a pimp named Colonel Sanders, and a cat killer named Jonnie Walker. Unsettling Doubts – whether or not Miss Saeki is Kafka's mother and whether or not he did have sex with the ghost of her childhood self. Merging of realms – the two storylines that come together, and the realm that Kafka explores in the woods in the mountains in Kochi. Disturbances to space, time and identity – Kafka is unsure of who he is in relation to the people around him, Oshima is revealed to be a transgendered gay man, Nakata becomes mentally handicapped as a young man, Miss Saeki is describes as not being able to experience time the same way other people do, and Kafka's missing memory when he wakes up to find he is covered in blood. However, Murakami himself does not see his writings as being that of magical realism, thus I want to complicate whether or not the texts are within the genre of magical realism.

Maggie Ann Bowers states that magical realism almost always cannot be allegorical[17] since the magical elements of a magical realist text should not be expanded beyond what it is and should be taken as mimetic. This rejection of the allegorical also ties to Todorov's third defining feature of the fantastic, as not being poetic or allegorical. Yet, Murakami has said that his

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[17] Bowers, M. (2004) *Magic(al) Realism*, Page 27-29

characters, like the reader, do question the validity of the magical elements in the "real" world settings of his stories, and often times uses literary devices such as metaphor, symbol, and allegory to drive the magical elements of his works. For example, *Kafka on the Shore* takes place in a late-80's early 90's Japan – the "real" world – and is an allegorical retelling of the oedipal prophecy as Kafka is given a curse by his father that Kafka will kill his father and have sex with both his mother and his sister. While this allusion to Sophocles isn't an exact one-for-one match it creates a *connection* and a *repetition* of the oedipal prophecy. This connection is what Bowers identifies as where magical realism breaks down and what Farris briefly alludes to when describing magical realism's use of a phenomenal world and unsettling doubts that cannot be explained via allegory.[18] *Kafka on the Shore*'s use of allegory however should not cast it aside as not being a magical realist text, but more so should change the perspective of which we look at magical realist texts and define magical realism for Murakami. I want to redefine Murakami's use of magical realism in his works in a different light.

Murakami, in his interview for The Paris Review, challenges the use of the term magical realism to refer to his texts since "in the classical kind of magic realism, the walls and the books are real. If something is fake in my fiction, I like to say it's fake. I don't want to act as if it's real."[19] This reinterpretation for Murakami is then redirecting how the fantastic and the realistic are related. Magical realism is often invoked when a realistic world has magical elements that are taken as real, or more precisely looks at the realistic in the magical. For Murakami, this is almost the opposite; he is looking at the magical in the realistic. The magical in the real can be seen as the interpretive nature of the real such as when Kafka is given the oedipal prophecy, thus

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[18] Farris, W. (2004) *Ordinary Enchantments*, Pages 14, 20-21.
[19] The Paris Review *The Art of Fiction*

allegory become the magical element of what is portrayed as real. In Matthew Carl Stretcher's work, *Dances with Sheep*, he argues that Murakami's use of magical realism "while closely linked with the *quest* for identity, is not necessarily involved with the *assentation* of an identity…[Murakami] uses magical realist techniques in order to advance his own agenda."[20] Murakami in his interview with The Paris Review is told that his texts "often comment on the strangeness of the story line, even call[s] the reader's attention to it." Murakami's responds, "my protagonists are experiencing what I experience as I write, which is also what the readers experience as they read."[21] Murakami is creating the questioning of the magical with his characters, which is paralleled in the reader's experience of the magical as well, creating a focalization and connection between the protagonists and the reader. Todorov also sees this connection between the reader and the protagonist as part of the tension that occurs with the fantastic. This creation of connection serves to create affect within the reader.[22] Stretcher, and many others, see Murakami's literary project to be a depiction of the unconscious, or Other (per Lacan). Jessica Manuel in her course series, Reading Beyond Murakami[23], expands and sees the literary project of Murakami to be that to understand metaphor, memory, and the unconscious. I believe that Murakami does fulfill Stretcher and Manuel's definition of trying to map the unconscious, and does so in many different methods, such as metaphor, which will be discussed in the next chapter, but primarily uses trauma as a way to explicate the unconscious.

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[20] Stretcher, M.(2002) *Dances with Sheep,* Page 82 (Emphasis Stretcher's)

[21] The Paris Review, *The Art of Fiction*

[22] This is further explored in Chapter 2 with first person and second person narration, and in Chapter 3 with affect.

[23] Manuel, J. (2017) Reading Beyond Murakami *Let Murakami Interpret Murakami* (0:30)

What then is this relation to how trauma comes about in genre? We can think of trauma as being a narrative mode or narrative theme within magical realism, since it shares common elements that I have previously described. Trauma is defined as sudden catastrophic events, delayed, uncontrolled or repetitive reactions, and intrusive phenomena within its narrative usage as Caruth describes it. How this is actually described is up for interpretation due to its subjective nature, but if we use Caruth's definition we can start to put it to use within Murakami in relation to genre.

Sudden catastrophic events occur with some frequency in Murakami. In the short story, *Super Frog Saves Tokyo* from *After the Quake*, there is a man who is asked by a frog to go underground to stop a giant worm from causing another earthquake that will hit Tokyo because he was awoken by the 1995 Kobe earthquake. The Kobe earthquake in *After the Quake* is the main subject of the short story collection as Murakami tries to understand how one comes to move on and overcome such a catastrophe. Catastrophe can also be seen within novels such as *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle, Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage, Norwegian Wood,* and *Kafka on the Shore*, and arguably in *Sputnik Sweetheart,* and *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World.* In *Kafka on the Shore*, a traumatic catastrophe is heavily tied to magical realism. One of the earliest examples is a report on what is called the "rice-bowl hill incident" in which a group of school children who are out in the woods on the rice-bowl hill suddenly lose consciousness. All but one student– Nakata, who becomes the second protagonist of the novel – regains consciousness. It is revealed that the teacher who was looking after the children had a traumatic experience involving Nakata; the teacher had her period while with the children on the rice-bowl hill and had to use a cloth in order to clean herself. She tried to hide the cloth in the woods, but Nakata found it and she suddenly slapped him, "I grabbed him by the

shoulders and was slapping him hard on the cheeks. I might have been yelling something. I don't recall…Suddenly I noticed all the children there staring at me…a deep silence descended on the woods…and that's when the children collapsed."[24] This incident become violent, catastrophic and traumatic for everyone as the children collapse, the teacher become distraught, and Nakata becomes mentally handicapped after coming out of a coma months later.

Thus, these stories show a way into which the elements that connect magical realism and trauma (narrative, memory, the unconscious, time, self, the world, meaning, truth, and the fantastic) can come about in Murakami. Murakami, while he does not exactly fit the exact definitions and the usages of magical realism, he is able to use the characteristics of magical realism in order to help explicate trauma and is able to skillful shed light onto those connections between the genre and that of trauma.

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[24] Murakami, H. (2005) *Kafka on the Shore*, Page 100-101

Chapter 2 – Trauma and Narrative

"That's how stories happen--with a turning point, an unexpected twist. There's only one kind of happiness, but misfortune comes in all shapes and sizes. It's like Tolstoy said. Happiness is an allegory, unhappiness a story."

Haruki Murakami, Kafka on the Shore[25]

Murakami, in an interview for The Paris Review, when asked about his stories and their structure said:

"Every time I write a new book, I like to destroy the former structure, to make up a new thing. And I always put a new theme, or a new restriction, or a new vision into the new book. I'm always conscious of the structure. If I change the structure, I have to change the style of my prose, and I have to change the characters accordingly."[26]

Murakami's emphasis on the structure of narrative, and how stories are told, are revealed in the several different approaches he uses when creating his novels. I want to examine the narrative structure of Murakami's texts and better identify how the texts themselves relate to trauma. The prime example is through double-telling, but there are also other ways this double-telling can be described that can be embedded into the texts through narrative features such as point of view, tense, framed narratives, and time.

Narratively, Caruth points out that trauma has a double-telling quality to it. This repetition is what binds those with trauma to the event or experience that has caused it. This can be expressed in narrative by either creating a doubling of the text and or by splitting of the text in two. Caruth states that:

"…we can begin to recognize the possibility of a history that is no longer straightforwardly referential. Through the notion of trauma, we can understand that a rethinking

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[25] Murakami, H (2005) *Kafka on the Shore*, Page 157
[26] The Paris Review, *The Art of Fiction*

of reference is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding, that is, at precisely permitting *history* to arise where *immediate understanding* may not."[27].

This resituating of history and understanding creates fragmentation within one's history, or one's story. Fred Alford further describes that, "The deeply traumatized individual generally learns to use his mind to hold him or herself. The result is a split between psyche and soma, and hence the loss of a certain feeling of vitality and spontaneity."[28] This split aligns with the double-telling's that Caruth describes, but also with that of Stretcher's and Manuel's understanding of Murakami's project being in part to understand and explicate the unconscious, and further describes a way in which trauma can resonate and be identified – loss of vitality and spontaneity – which aligns with Caruth's definition.

Double-telling and fragmentation can be represented within a text in a varying number of ways; repetition of a particular section of text, fragmenting the text without chronology, multiple narratives and having them be broken up throughout the text, etc. The most immediate examples of this fragmentation and doubling are those found in the differing point of view chapters found in several of Murakami's works. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* the odd chapters are in the first person past tense where we meet an unnamed protagonist who is a Calcutec, which is a human data encryption processor, in the near distant future in Tokyo. The even chapters interrupt this first narrative with a fantastic story told in first person present tense of another unnamed protagonist who enters "The Town" which is surrounded by high walls and everyone is defined based on the job they are given, to which the protagonist is given the title and job of "Dream Reader". From the beginning, we are not given a clear sense of the

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[27] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 11 (Emphasis Caruth's)
[28] Alford, F. (2014) *Trauma and Forgiveness: Consequences and Communities*, Page 50

connection between the Calcutec and the Dream Reader. It is only until halfway through the text that we come to understand the connection is that the world of The Town is an unconscious creation of the Calcutec, who is slowly changing states of his psyche from the world around him towards the world of his unconscious. This fragmentation and separation of the two narratives, and the tense to which they are narrated, creates a sense of unease and causes the reader to investigate how these two are connected since these two distinct stories are forced to be next to each other, and are not as complete and separate narratives. Within the novel itself, this revelation that the narrative is actually one is revealed by a scientist who was a part of making the Calcutec who he is, and when he eventually describes that the Calcutec's mind is verging into his unconscious he claims there is a reason why this is happening and speculates that "'I can think of many possible causes…Childhood trauma, misguided upbringin', over-objectified ego, guilt…Whatever it was made you extremely self-protective, made you harden your shell'"[29].

What is even more interesting about *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* is not just in fragmenting the text between two different points of view, but also in tense. The odd chapters are told in the first person past tense, and the even chapters are told in the first person present tense. The reason for the first-person perspective is the intimacy the reader has with the protagonist, but it also indirectly connects the Calcutec to the Dream-reader, since they are technically the same person in both stories. However, with tense, this is actually a translational approach. In the original Japanese, the odd chapters are written with the pronoun "Watashi", which is the formal usage of "I", then in the even chapters, the Dream-Reader refers to himself using "Boku" which is an informal use of "I". However, whenever the Dream-Reader's shadow

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[29] Murakami, H. (1991) *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, Page 268

is using I, he uses “Ore” which is the most informal usage of “I”. This multifaceted linguist construction of the narrative and how it is portrayed brings to light the fragmentation of not just time and narrative, but also of the self. Thinking back to Alford’s quote that traumatized individuals split themselves is directly explicated in the novel, in the structure, in the plot, and in the narration.

Fragmentation doesn’t have to be on a cyclical pattern in the way that *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* does in flipping back and forth between multiple narratives. It can be completed cut off half way, and picked up later, or never picked up at all. Other works that are more creative with this kind of fragmentation includes *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. In it, multiple narratives subtly, and often abruptly, come about. The first example is that of Chapter 6 in Book 1 called “On the Births of Kumiko Okada and Noboru Wataya”. In this chapter, we cut away from the present to have the protagonist and narrator, Toru Okada, husband of Kumiko, tell us the readers of the early relationship between Kumiko and her brother Noboru. The function of the chapter allows us as readers to better understand and characterize Kumiko, via focalization through Toru, and her brother Noboru, who is indirectly characterized as the antagonist of the text. This chapter however sticks out because it immediately stops the chronological flow of the narrative in order to better describe and flesh out two major characters. Non-chronology and trauma come about since, as previously described, trauma involves double-telling. The same is done with how those effected by trauma try to make sense of the change from the straightforward referential to the fragmented. Other Murakami novels that fragments the text via chapter perspectives, or doublings, also includes *Kafka on the Shore*, *1Q84,* and *After Dark*.

The next example of fragmentation through other narratives in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* is in the story of Creta Kano, who tells Toru of her early life, in how everyday she felt a constant and remarkable pain that led her to want to kill herself by driving into a wall. Creta survives the accident, but finds all feeling of pain and suffering gone, but in turn she finds a numbness and debt that leads her to become a "prostitute of the flesh"[30]. Later, she has Noboru Wataya as a customer who would causes her new pain and suffering that will traumatize her. Before she tells this part of her story, her rape, she asks for a cup of tea from Toru, and when Toru returns she is gone. It is only until 17 chapters later do we get the continuation of the story in how he raped her and the trauma she felt;

> "Whatever it was that he put inside me, it made me feel pain for the first time since my failed suicide attempt – real, intense pain that belonged to me and to no one else…the pain was almost impossibly intense, as if my physical self were splitting in two from the inside out. And yet, as terrible as it felt, I was writing as much in pleasure as in pain…In the midst of this pain and pleasure, my flesh went on splitting in two. There was no way for me to prevent it from happening. Then something very weird occurred. Out from between the two cleanly split haves of my physical self came crawling a thing that I had never seen or touched before…this man had drawn it out of me."[31]

Another story is told in a similar fashion to Creta's is the story of Lieutenant Mamiya's during the Japanese occupation of Manchukuo and Siberia during WWII. The Lieutenant meets Toru to give Toru a possession of a man whom Toru and his wife Kumiko met with when they were newlyweds, Mr. Honda, who worked with the Lieutenant during a secret mission in Manchukuo. However, this story is obstructed by Mamiya having to catch a train home, but towards the end of the novel the Lieutenant writes to Toru about what happened after his first part of his story concluded, which included meeting a man who skinned alive his superior and

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[30] Murakami, H. (1997) *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle,* Page 212
[31] Murakami, H. (1997) *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle,* Page 300-301

then meeting him again in a Siberian labor camp. This second story, the story of the Lieutenant in the labor camp, is split in half by an entire chapter. Chronologically, it is hard to define when in the timeline of the narrative when this letter was read, if at all. This unknowing about who has read letters is another theme that pops up in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* with the letters of May Kasahara, who over the course of the third part of the novel writes Toru six letters that are revealed in the last chapter of the book that Toru never read any of them and never received them. The letters themselves give a deep and personal insight to May Kasahara and her thoughts, but the order of which they come into the story suggest a chronology to them, as between letters two and three May says that she is going to try to go to sleep but then stays up and writes another letter and sends both, and it is unclear whether or not these two letters were sent in the same envelope, let alone the same time. This fragmentation, ambiguity, and deceit pierces the story and breaks it down to suspend chronology, and a connection between two characters, who we have assumed to have had a continued connection, but find in the last chapter that this was never the case, further fragmenting characters to one another.

These four examples show fragmentation and a dissonance in understanding, both with the diegetic characters, but also with the non-diegetic reader. These fragmentations hide a full understanding of the stories, and how we, or the characters, are meant to understand other characters within the narrative. There is something lost in this fragmentation; cohesiveness. This allows the characters who hear and read these stories, and ourselves, to gain a moment to reflect upon these narratives and try to explicate them to a level of interpretation and understanding. We find that we know more about May Kasahara than Toru does even though she is writing intimately to Toru. By fragmenting narrative, Murakami creates a space between these moments

of intimacy and devastation, both for the characters who are told the stories, but also for the reader.

Another example of double-telling by having completely different plots occurs in *Kafka on the Shore*. The odd chapters describe a fifteen-year-old boy's adventure to a library in Takamatsu and how he comes to find and meet his family while trying to escape an oedipal prophecy with which he is cursed. The even chapters tell of a man who was affected by a mysterious event during WWII who afterwards is able to talk to cats and his journey around Japan with a truck driver. These two seemingly separate stories are told in tandem to one another with little connection between them. It is only towards the end of the narrative where Nakata is able to meet Miss Saeki, who is later revealed to potentially be Kafka's mother. Even with this resolution of a connection, there is still little to no explanation as to why these two stories are connected other than by some supernatural force or fate.

With regard to fate, time is another large factor that plays into the traumatic elements of Murakami. As discussed, magical realism can employ the disturbance to time in a story to create the fantastic elements. Time, for Caruth, becomes disturbed as well with traumatic experiences since traumatic experiences and feelings are often times repeated or suspended to bring the person experiencing the trauma back to the traumatic experience. Within Murakami, he implements time and time disturbances within several of his works, but also in his overall literary project in terms of setting. Many of his works take place around the year 1984 (*A Wild Sheep Chase,* and its sequel *Dance Dance Dance, The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle,* and *1Q84).* This focus on the year of 1984 may give us perspective into the author himself. While he has never mentioned any incidents happening to him in 1984, which would be around the time he was writing *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World,* the fact that he focuses on this one

year can be interpreted as his works as being timeless, on unable to move forward, as if stuck in the trauma of themselves. Other characters actually experience time differently. In *Kafka on the Shore,* Miss Saeki is said to be frozen in time; "Miss Saeki's life basically stopped at age twenty, when her lover died. No, maybe not age twenty, maybe much earlier…I don't know the details but you need to be aware of this. The hands of the clock buried inside her soul ground to a halt then. Time outside, of course, flows on as always, but she isn't affected by it. For her, what we consider normal time is essentially meaningless."[32] This frozenness in time is then related to her trauma – "Miss Saeki's has a wounded heart…But Miss Saeki has a special *individual* wound that goes beyond the usual meaning of the term. Her soul moves in mysterious ways."[33] This exact explication of Miss Saeki's wound, that becomes the catalyst for a lot of what occurs in the novel is examined with time, and how she appears frozen or differentiated from the normal time everyone else is experiencing, thus alluding to the disturbances in time seen with both trauma and magical realism. The fact that Murakami has characters that experience time differently, and has narrative structures that create this as well, further alludes to his stories as those that create and explicate trauma.

While I have examined the ways in which the narratives themselves are told, I want to focus in on how the traumatic stories are told, and where one finds a character in a state of trauma, as this adds a level of depth to Murakami. One example of how traumatic stories are told are often in a dialogue. For example, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* we have the story of a woman that Toru, the protagonist, works with and who asks Toru to hold her. The encounter then moves to a story of her telling us about her childhood in which she was almost swept into a culvert. She is so

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[32] Murakami, H. (2005) *Kafka on the Shore*, Page 161
[33] Murakami, H. (2005) *Kafka on the Shore*, Page 161, Emphasis Murakami's

shaken by the incident that she feels it necessary for someone to hold her in order to "recharge" herself. This specific example shows a traumatic incident for an individual character, and she recounts it in order to justify her request. This traumatic incident is used to give context to the actions of a character, and to better bring the character to life, or better yet to make them mimetic. This explication of trauma in order to better describe a character happens several times within Murakami's works. However, what is interesting is that it is not just context to us the reader, but to other characters, as if to explain themselves in the story world. This dialogical approach to trauma is representative of the "talking cure" that Freud uses in psychoanalysis, in order for those with trauma to overcome it. In this particular instance, the coworker is telling her trauma in order to overcome it, but also asks to be held in order to not feel lost. The same technique is used with Lieutenant Mamiya's story of him being taken as a prisoner of war in WWII – he needs to talk about his trauma in order to help him come to terms with it.

Within the texts themselves, Murakami has these traumatic incidents appear at critical points within the texts in order to give depth to characters. For example, in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Lieutenant Mamiya tells his story through dialogue and writings, on the exact day that Toru's wife, Kumiko, leaves him, and his story is finished just before Kumiko returns. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the Professor gives trauma as a potential source of the split psyche of the Calcutec, right when we the readers finally understand the connection between the two narratives. Lastly, in *Kafka on the Shore*, the two narratives are merged together when Nakata meets Miss Saeki in order to burn the pages of her life that she has written. These traumatic incidents are used here to try to bring connection between narratives, but also between ideas that are brought up in the story.

Considering the narration of trauma, trauma also manifests in another way – metaphor. Jessica Manuel sees Murakami's literary project as also being about metaphors, of which he is able to manipulate language to create intuition and to potentially drive the fantastic elements that Murakami uses in his own version of magical realism. While I also endorse this viewpoint, I think that Murakami's intricate metaphors and the language he uses is also indicative of the trauma that is being created. For example, in *Sputnik Sweetheart*, a common metaphor used throughout the story is that sometimes you have to "slit a dog's throat" and "shed fresh blood"[34]. This traumatic idea of killing an animal is related to the title of the novel with Sputnik (which is Russian for 'traveling companion'). Other parts of the story talk about Laika the dog that was sacrificed with her being put into orbit with Sputnik II and who was alone in the vacuum of space. Throughout the rest of the novel ideas about travel, loneliness, and blood, are used to tie these three ideas together again with a violent metaphor. This is where Murakami shines in his writing, because he is able to allow his characters to further develop these ideas into poignant theories and deep asides such as the following:

> "Why do people have to be this lonely? What's the point of it all? Millions of people in this world, all of them yearning, looking to others to satisfy them, yet isolating themselves. Why? Was the Earth put here just to nourish human loneliness?"[35]

This language allows Murakami to explore trauma in a very different way – through language.

Murakami, throughout his texts, bends the way the stories are told in order to thematically tie the narrative structure to trauma (double-telling and fragmentation), or in order to further drive the empathetic connection between the character(s) and the reader. Trauma is further explicated in

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[34] Murakami, H. (2001) *Sputnik Sweetheart*, Page 16
[35] Murakami, H. (2001) *Sputnik Sweetheart*, Page 179

such a way as to further describe and give depth to characters. In the speech he gave for accepting the Jerusalem Prize, Murakami stated he always sides with “the egg” that is constantly thrown against the System, or a wall.

> “Each of us is, more or less, an egg. Each of us is a unique, irreplaceable soul enclosed in a fragile shell. This is true of me, and it is true of each of you. And each of us, to a greater or lesser degree, is confronting a high, solid wall. The wall has a name: it is "the System." The System is supposed to protect us, but sometimes it takes on a life of its own, and then it begins to kill us and cause us to kill others -- coldly, efficiently, systematically. I have only one reason to write novels, and that is to bring the dignity of the individual soul to the surface and shine a light upon it.”[36]

For Murakami, he wants to shed light on the story of the individual, and the nuances of the individual, sometimes in relation to the wall. That story is that of trauma, of people trying to live with the pain and the wounds of life – the system – in order to champion the individual and their depth. He does this by allowing the narratives themselves to explicate and allude to trauma, while explicating trauma through language, metaphor, and through dialogue.

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[36] *The Novelist in Wartime*

Chapter 3 – Trauma and Closure

"Just because there's an end doesn't mean existence has meaning. An end point is simply set up as a temporary marker or perhaps as an indirect metaphor for the fleeting nature of existence."

Haruki Murakami, What I Talk About When I Talk About Running[37]

Genre and narrative structure lends itself to the expectations that Murakami gives his readers for the story. However, the end result that takes place is often just as fantastic as the events that occur with the text, by subverting the expectations once we read the final page. These expectations guide us as readers to understand whether or not a narrative has closure. What are these expectations in and how they guide us to understand whether or not Murakami's texts have closure? The direct answer to this that often times Murakami suspends closure and often causes affect upon readers. Narratives that do not offer full closure disrupt how we come to understand and interpret the text and could even create trauma for the readers themselves.

First, I want to define closure and to have a better sense of whether or not a story has closure. Barthes in *S/Z* theorized that every narrative utilizes five narrative codes; the Hermeneutic, the Proairetic, the Semantic, the Symbolic, and the Cultural. The most important when understanding closure in a text is the hermeneutic code – the questions or enigmas that exist within a text that needs to be answered. Abbott in *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* explains that when a story does not resolve all the hermeneutic codes of the text, there are levels to which there is no closure for that text. Barthes describes several ways in which the hermeneutic code causes tension with a lack of closure. These include a snare, or when a truth is

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[37] Murakami, H (2004) *What I Talk About When I Talk About Running,* Page 115

deliberately ignored,[38] which can cause a tension in so far as that a way to answer the question is being ignored. Narratively, this ignored truth can function as something that should be focused on by the reader since the narrative refuses to do so, or that the reader should not focus on it since the narrative is not interested in this truth. Another way the hermeneutic code can be subverted is with equivocations. Partial equivocations are when an answer is partially answered, and suspended equivocation, which is when the enigmas of the text are completely forgotten and never answered. Lastly, Barthes uses jamming to describe when a text directly admits that there is no answer at all to the question or enigma. Murakami uses these three devices (snares, jammings, and equivocations) in the hermeneutic coding of his novels with a high frequency that leads the reader to a sense of anti-closure.

Murakami in the interview for The Paris Review was told that his "novels, too—particularly your more recent books, like *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*—often seem to resist a resolution of the kind that the reader is perhaps expecting."[39] Murakami himself responded with:

> "Not solely. You've read Raymond Chandler, of course. His books don't really offer conclusions. He might say, "He is the killer." but it doesn't matter to me who did it. There was a very interesting episode when Howard Hawks made a picture of The Big Sleep. Hawks couldn't understand who killed the chauffeur, so he called Chandler and asked, and Chandler answered, "I don't care!" Same for me. Conclusion means nothing at all. I don't care who the killer is in The Brothers Karamazov."[40]

The nothingness, in a conclusion, creates a suspension of the hermeneutic code and the questions we *expect* to receive as readers. The hermeneutic code is not just the questions and enigmas that exist outside the story that readers are asking, but also those *within* by the characters, especially if Murakami wants to orient readers to be aligned with the protagonists.

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[38] Barthes, R, (1970) *S/Z*, Page 85
[39] The Paris Review, *The Art of Fiction*
[40] The Paris Review, *The Art of Fiction*

Another theorist on closure is Noël Carroll who in her essay *Narrative Closure* articulates that to obtain narrative closure the closure must come about narratively in how the causation of events can help to answer the questions posed, they cannot be simply given an explanation outside of the narrative itself. Two other thinkers, Frank Kermode and Barbara Smith examine closure in different ways. For Kermode, in his work *The Sense of an Ending,* sees readers needing closure in order to better understand and justify order and meaning onto the texts themselves. With Barbara Smith, in *Poetic Closure,* she sees closure as having stability and truth in the text and the narrative but focuses on poetry, rather than narrative.

Thus, I want to define closure as the following – a characteristic of a text when it fully satisfies most of the questions posed within itself and resolves thematic and or narrative issues. This definition allows for several definitions and methods of closure articulated by Barthes (which is further explicated by Abbott[41]), Carroll, Smith, and Kermode. In regard to whether or not most of the questions raised are answered is also up for interpretation based upon how crucial the questions are, what value the reader holds to those questions, or how explicit the questions are. The big question is whether or not Murakami's texts have closure. I want to take several examples of Murakami novels that challenge this very definition based upon primarily how Barthes defines whether or not the questions of a text are answered, per Abbott's explication of Barthes. I want to begin with one of his first novels, *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* in order to start to get a sense of how Murakami ends his works and then look at *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, to do a more detailed analysis of closure.

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[41] Abbott, H. (2002) *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative,* Page 54

Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World, begins with two parallel stories, one that follows a Calcutec as he does a job for a man named "The Professor", and the other follows a man who enters a mystical town where he becomes a dream-reader and works with his shadow to escape. For the first half of the novel we do not understand the connection between the two, until the professor reveals the "End of the World" is an unconscious creation of the Calcutec, and that the Calcutec's mind is slowly moving from his conscious reality towards the unconscious setting of The Town, and that there is nothing that can stop this change. For the remainder of the Calcutec's plot, he goes about his life trying to find a sense of closure and finality at accepting the situation but ends up taking on simple tasks such as doing laundry, meeting up with a friend, and watching the water from a beach while listening to Bob Dylan. This narrative seems complete as it uses the first-person past tense to focalize readers to his position of acceptance and ends with a thematic closure of Bob Dylan's song 'A hard rain's a-gonna fall'. However, there is a contrast to this story with the other narrative, where the Dream-reader is trying to escape the Town with his shadow, but he lets the shadow fall into a whirlpool in order to potentially escape, while he will go back and help a friend, the Librarian, find her memories and the memories of those who inhabit a nearby forest. In this narrative, we get a jamming, in the fact that the story explicitly ignores what will happen next and leaves us with an image of a shadow falling into the whirlpool and birds flying over the walls that surround the Town, but also with the fact that we will not know what will happen to the Calcutec.

In *Sputnik Sweetheart* the main question of the text is "what happened to Sumire"? The story begins with an objective sentence; "In the spring of her twenty-second year, Sumire fell in love for the first time in her life." This declarative sentence we later see is actually made by a first-person narrator who is writing on an experience that happened over a year ago. The chapters

then follow a general chronological order yet is continuously distorted. There are many paragraph breaks that are continuous throughout the novel. We see the story jumping back and forth between experiences Sumire has with Miu, her love interest, and the interactions between Sumire and K, the protagonist. Sprinkled throughout the text are asides that the protagonist directs at the reader; "I might as well just come out and say it"[42], and "It's time to say a few words about myself."[43] The story then continues on with the development of a metaphor, the sputnik sweetheart, who is Sumire. The metaphor engrosses loneliness, with Laika the dog being up in Sputnik II, all alone, about to die, but also the relationship between Sumire and Miu as being futile. The story switches from being a simple realistic romance novel to a detective novel with the realization that Sumire has gone missing on a Greek island and Miu needs K's help. We the readers, and K, soon learn that Sumire disappeared off the island, but no one saw her, and someone would have noticed if she tried to run away, or if she tried to swim off the island she would have died, and her body would have been discovered on the beach. K then looks at two documents Sumire wrote just before she disappeared; one about the philosophical ramblings of Sumire and a dream she had and the other about an experience that Miu had when she was younger. In the second document we finally start to see elements of magical realism start to come about with Miu being stuck at the top of a Ferris wheel while witnessing a doppelganger of herself be raped inside her house. Miu then wakes up, feeling as if she has been split in two and with pure white hair. After reading the documents, K theorizes that Sumire went to "the other side" where Miu's other half went, where Sumire's dead mother was located. K wakes up that night hearing music and goes out onto the beach where Sumire went. There, he has a strange

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[42] Murakami, H. (2001) *Sputnik Sweetheart,* Page 6
[43] Murakami, H. (2001) *Sputnik Sweetheart,* Page 54

experience using language and metaphors about the moon and shadows as if he is somehow leaving his body and time becoming elastic. The strangeness of the experience makes us as readers wonder what the meaning of this experience is, which is directly asked by K. K believes this experience is what caused Miu to be split in half, and Sumire disappear. The next chapter cuts to K leaving Greece, and him being asked to talk to his girlfriend's son who has been shoplifting. Afterwards, K decides no longer to see the student's mother, goes to sleep wishing Sumire would call him again. He then wakes up to find Sumire on the phone, at a phone booth somewhere. K tells her to figure out where she is and to call him back. The story ends with K waiting for Sumire to call, and K looking up at the sky and then down at his hands, "I spread my fingers apart and stare at the palms of both hands, looking for bloodstains. There aren't any. No scent of blood, no stiffness. The blood must have already, in its own silent way, seeped inside."[44] Here, we have a partial equivocation – the answer is partially given to the question of what happened to Sumire, but we are never given the explanation. Yet, the strange metaphors and language induce the magical realism that appears in the text, per K's thoughts and Sumire's writing, to indicate that there might be an explanation to how Sumire returned. Some have theorized that Sumire doesn't return and the end is a dream, and others say that K entered the other side with Sumire. However, these answers are *interpretations* for the reader to create given the clues at which they grasp.

Now that I have provided a simple guide to the text I want to examine how the previous points that I have been focusing on throughout my thesis – magical realism and narrative structure – relates to the lack of closure. The magical elements – Miu's strange experience and

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[44] Murakami, H. (2001) *Sputnik Sweetheart,* Page 210

the disappearance of Sumire – immediately draw our attention to them and makes us ask how these things happened. With Miu, we don't really know, and she will never know – a jamming. The fact that this story is told in the past tense, and Miu has accepted it allows us as readers to ignore the questions raised by her story – it has already concluded. However, Sumire's disappearance, the focal point of the story, is answered but not directly. Sumire does return, but nowhere does the story allow there to be an exact explanation. K does not ask how she got back, he asks 'where are you?' This partial equivocation (Sumire's return) also gives a direct jamming, per the novel ending and no longer allowing the narrative to even introduce the question of how causes *us* as readers to ask the question and become unnerved by the fact that the text refuses to answer it. The strange metaphors – Laika and Sputnik, the moon, and blood[45] – are used several times and their repetition causes us as readers to try to look for an explanation, or another occurrence of them in order to fully flesh them out in relation to the story and the questions asked, while suspending any sense of closure one may have towards the text.

In *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, the main question of the text is "Why did Tsukuru's friends leave him"? This novel is told in omniscient past-tense narration where we follow Tsukuru as he tries to understand why his four "colorful" friends left him after he went to college in Tokyo to become a train station engineer. The story is focalized through Tsukuru as he reflects back on multiple points in his life, which is also told to his girlfriend, Sara. We soon understand the tight-knit relationship between the five friends, and how when Tsukuru goes off to Tokyo, he comes back to find all of his friends hating him and never wanting to see him again. He never asks why. He soon becomes depressed and talks to his roommate who

[45] See previous chapter for further explication of this metaphor

shares a strange story about his father meeting a colorless man who is close to death. This then transpires into a strange sexual experience between Tsukuru and his roommate. Tsukuru is able to find a little bit of strength to live by diving into his studies. When Tsukuru's girlfriend tells him to find out what happened between him and his friends, he meets with each of them. The first friend he meets tells him directly that Shiro, one of the girls in their group of friends, suddenly and emotionally claimed that Tsukuru raped her, and because of her adamant statement everyone had to believe her. This sudden revelation comes early on in the story[46] and we as readers are given the answer but the story continues. Tsukuru continues to visit the rest of his friends, understanding what led Shiro to this idea, and what led up to her violent death. What is particularly strange about this is that the story has already answered the central question, and there are plenty of points that give evidence to why this happened, and yet the story continues. The novel ends with Tsukuru returning home feeling he has now moved beyond this trauma, but finds his girlfriend, Sara, with another man, and he decides he is going to go to their next date and confront her about this other man. Here, we are given a quick question to answer, with a suspension – no answer. What is much more interesting about this work is that while we are given the expectation of a story with a central question, that question is quickly answered and meanders on until we find a new question to which we are never given the answer. What this story seems to do is suggest that while we are able to come up with the answers to a bigger question, other questions are left without a clear answer, nor is the text allowing any possibility of the answer. This creates both a sense of closure and a lack at the same time.

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[46] Murakami, H. (2015) *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, Page 140

In the essay by Virginia Yeung who explores closure with Murakami's *Sputnik Sweetheart* says that "the ending thus leaves an unanswered and unanswerable question"[47] (which is also the case in *Colorless*). The unanswerable question in *Sputnik Sweetheart* being 'is she really back in Japan or is it just a figment of the narrator's imagination?'. As discussed, Murakami's fascination with the unconscious brings to life the magical elements of everyday reality, but Yeung sees his use of the unconscious not being just about the characters in his texts but for his readers as well;

> "My discussion suggests that these endings are deliberately elusive so that readers are drawn emotionally closer to the novel world towards the end. Without their conscious knowledge, readers are turned from passive agents to active participants in the process of story creation – the indefiniteness prompts them to configure the untold part of the story, and create their own interpretation, which is prone to being affected by their own past experience, cultural background and other factors that have shaped their view of life."[48]

Here, Yeung is suggesting what Murakami has already stated, that he wants the readers and the protagonists to become emotionally connected, what this further creates is an active experience of the ending and towards the characters. If there is lack of closure within Murakami narratives, and this is another method to connect readers to the protagonist, then there is a disconnection once a reader has reached the end of a story, often a sudden impending disconnection as any story has to have a final page. This lack of closure and connection I think is driving forward another level of trauma; affectual trauma. The fact that the stories draw readers closer with equivocations and snares, and with the connection between the protagonist and the reader would create a void once the reader finishes the narrative without any closure. This hole, I

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[47] Yeung, V. (2013) *Equivocal Endings and the Theme of Love in Murakami Haruki's Love Stories,* Page 288

[48] Yeung, V. (2013) *Equivocal Endings and the Theme of Love in Murakami Haruki's Love Stories,* Page 292

want to suggest, is a type of trauma that is felt by the reader themselves. The parallel between lack of closure and trauma seems quite poignant, especially since as I have discussed that many of Murakami's narratives are directly dealing with trauma and that the narrative structures themselves are reflected in post-traumatic experiences. The greater understanding in terms of how we should view lack of narrative closure is that of a traumatic experience for the reader. If we are given expectations and led down a narrative path where we expect these expectations to be fulfilled, or at least experimented with, but still receive no sense of closure, or finality, it is understandable to say that the ending creates a level of trauma, since the experience is sudden, and maybe even catastrophic. This may seem hyperbolic, yet the suddenness of the fantastical elements, and the narrative structures implemented into Murakami's fiction can leave those lasting effects and leaving the interpretation of the text up to the reader in order to try to find the answers to unanswerable questions. The same process of trying to find answers to unanswerable questions is the same for trauma.

Chapter 4 – Trauma and Teleology

"I can bear any pain as long as it has meaning."
Haruki Murakami, 1Q84[49]

As discussed, Murakami's texts are interwoven with trauma through genre, narrative structure, and a lack of narrative closure. The last narrative element that I want to look at that is related to trauma is the meaning or function of a text. But how do we come to find the meaning / purpose / function of a text, and what could that be within Murakami's texts specifically? What is the purpose of trauma within Murakami's texts and, more abstractly, what is the connection between trauma and how we come to understand its purpose in how people who experience trauma find meaning in their own lives? One element of meaning that I also want to address here is truth since meaning is in itself a kind of truth. What is the truth of trauma? Is understanding or truth itself a type of trauma? What I hope to achieve in this chapter is a bigger idea behind the meaning of trauma and have a more holistic understanding of how one interprets and understands the texts of Haruki Murakami.

After a traumatic event, the most common question felt by those who experience trauma is "why?". This question can be understood through a multitude of perspectives; the theological, the historical, the cultural, etc. But in asking the question of "why did this happen?" there also comes an apparent sense of someone trying to understand the purpose behind the trauma, as if by understanding such trauma, one can overcome it. One such example of trying to overcome trauma by understanding comes from an episode that occurs in *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*. In Chapter 9, Toru recounts a memory of when he went over to a coworker's house after work and

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[49] Murakami, H. (2012) *1Q84,* Page 546

encounters her crying wanting him to hold her to "recharge" her. She recounts a traumatic experience from when she was almost sucked into a culvert. She then says:

"I can still picture everything that happened. I'm lying on my back and being swept along by the water. The sides of the stream tower over me like high stone walls, and overhead is the blue sky. Sharp, clear blue. I'm being swept along in the flow. Swish, swish, faster and faster. But I can't understand what it means. And then all of a sudden I *do* understand- that there's darkness lying ahead. *Real* darkness. Soon it comes and tries to drink me down. I can feel a cold shadow beginning to wrap itself around me. That's my earliest memory."[50]

The sudden revelation of understanding to better know what the situation *means* creates both a sense of dread (the cold shadow) and a sense of self (the earliest memory). This tie between memory and shadow is not the only time we see it present in Murakami, but in fact, these two themes are a trope in some of Murakami's most well-known and philosophical novels. In *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, the Dream-Reader is separated from his shadow which contains part of his mind and his memory, and in *Kafka on the Shore* – which was supposed to be a sequel to *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* – Nakata is said to have half of his shadow and has a lack of memory and mind since he became handicapped. Jonathan Boulter, a scholar of Murakami, examines trauma in Murakami by referencing Abraham and Torok, who says that via trauma the psyche splits, creating a hidden self. He applies this to *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* with the split narrative. As discussed in Chapter 2, the splitting of the narrative and the self creates double telling, and thus a world kept secret from the other. Boulter further examines the claim made by the Professor – that the Calcutec is able to Shuffle due to trauma, guilt, ego, etc. – in so far that the trauma felt then is different from the trauma felt now – the loss of the core self,[51] core consciousness, memory, or

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[50] Murakami, H. (1997) *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Page 105 (Emphasis Murakami's)
[51] Murakami, H. (1997) *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*, Page 66

shadow. This shadow is referential to Jung, who theorized that the shadow was a part of the unconscious self but was that part which contains all negative emotions and sentiments. This puts Murakami further in a psychoanalytic mode, that references Freud, Jung, and Lacan.

Marilyn Charles, in her essay for *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage,* uses Lacan's term of anamorphosis to describe Murakami's work by explaining how his narratives…

> "take the form of a labyrinthian, enigmatic maze in which the principal character becomes caught. The labyrinth, as a trope, can be linked to Lacan's (1978) ideas of anamorphosis, something that becomes visible when it can be viewed from a new perspective… That capacity to suddenly see things from a new vantage point is also fundamental to the psychoanalytic journey, in which what we are seeking often is hidden in plain sight. The challenge is to discover—or rediscover—the meaning (Parsons, 1986)."[52]

Many psychoanalysts directly tie trauma with meaning, or understanding, in the same sense that Charles makes here, but also to metaphor. Charles further uses Lacan to explicate how metaphor and metonymy – which Murakami even investigates with *Sputnik Sweetheart* with the difference between a sign and a symbol[53] – and how this relates to non-meaning. She also mentions how Murakami makes traumatic narratives via structure, as I have, in the fragmentation and doublings of the text. Charles further looks at how signs, symbols and structures create room for interpretation as it relates to a lack of closure;

> "There is an important interplay between the structure that contains the meanings and the freedom that affords sufficient room for creative engagement to allow the fragments to reveal themselves over time. The openness of this process, the fact that there is no absolute ending but rather that discovery and revelation can continue to evolve over time."[54]

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[52] Charles, M. (2016) *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, S138-S139
[53] Murakami, H. (2001) *Sputnik Sweetheart,* Page 28
[54] Charles, M. (2016) *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and His Years of Pilgrimage*, S139

Another key factor that Charles brings up with the Lacanian interpretation of Murakami is talking about the vantage point to which one sees the thing in a new light. This vantage point, or more broadly, the focalization, becomes directly tied to how one sees the world and comes to understand it. This direction suggests that the world is a complex system to which only through certain perspectives can one truly come to understand it. The same can be said for trauma – if one takes on a new understanding of how the trauma happened by looking at things from a new focal point, or vantage point, then maybe an anamorphosis can happen. This occurs with the movement through particular unconscious settings. In many Murakami novels, there is often a setting used to describe what the unconscious looks like; a dark and empty hotel (i.e. *Dance, Dance, Dance,* and *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle*). Characters are often able to enter the unconscious but find themselves lost and only until they pass through a wall do they find a new perspective or new understanding for and of themselves. It is also in *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* where the Town, an unconscious creation of the Calcutec, where through revealing a truth about the Town does a new interpretation of what the Town is and what is happening within it come to fruition.

Caruth also looks to Lacan for interpretation of awakening, which is in itself a type of truth. Lacan looks at Freud's dream of the burning child and states that dreaming is a part of waking up. If Freud sees dreams as a product of unconsciousness, then if the act of dreaming is about awakening, then the unconscious is about bringing truth to the light. Caruth then quotes Lacan and says: "Awakening, in Lacan's reading of the dream, is itself the site of a trauma"[55]

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[55] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experiences,* Page 100

Granted, this is in relation to death, but the fact that death is a part of trauma, that means that in awakening and experiencing trauma there is a connection to truth.

> "Traumatic experience, in its very immediacy, involves a delay – it is the repetition of the earlier or the coming of the later – and in this sense is itself a remainder, in the sense that Rambo defines it in her essay: something that is "ungraspsed" not because it is simply too painful for understanding, but rather because it has remained in the very aftermath of the world – of meaning, experience, historical significance – that it has destroyed. Trauma in this sense operates as a kind of writing – of the mind, or of the soul – that has existed both before and after the various meanings that have attached themselves to it and create the familiar worlds we have not lost."[56]

This use of trauma, and thus meaning, as being un-grasped, means that both trauma and meaning are up for interpretation and can be subjectively used or viewed. In relation to closure, the fact that not all the answers are given, to either the reader or the protagonist, lends itself to the revelation that if Murakami's works are traumatic in themselves, then the effect upon the reader would almost always make the reader search for meaning, and overcome the trauma. Caruth in *Unclaimed Experiences* states that trauma, "can only be understood as the absolute inability of the mind to avoid an unpleasurable event that has not been given psychic meaning in any way. In trauma, that is, the outside has gone inside without any mediation."[57] This suggests that trauma, for an individual, is that personal experience, or specific repetition or flashback, that does not have a meaning. A Freudian interpretation of how one overcomes trauma is by understanding it and giving it meaning (i.e. analysis of the burning boy in *The Interpretation of Dreams*).

To understand something, one must find the truth of it, or uncover its secrets. Jonathan Boulter in his book *Melancholy and the Archive* dedicates a chapter at looking at history in

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[56] Caruth, C. (2008) *After the End: A Response*, Page 125
[57] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 59

relation to Murakami and directly looks at trauma as it relates to guilt and secrets. Boulter quotes Heidegger's *Being and Time* and describes truth as "always already secret", and describes truth as only ever being *violently* revealed.[58] This violence parallels Caruth's reading of Lacan and awakening. If awakening or truth is the site of trauma, then revealing truth a potential type of trauma. Boulter further makes an imperative claim that:

> "We must make sense of the intimate relation between the physical and psychological assault and the revelation of the truth of things...if Murakami's project is to reveal the secret, then his discourse – his novels and nonfiction – must be seen not merely as representations of violence, but as *themselves* works of violence."[59]

I want to take Boulter's approach to Murakami and his literary project, but as evidenced by what I have previously described Murakami's works both represent trauma and *are, in themselves,* traumatic. If the narrative methods Murakami uses are used to create empathic responses to trauma as well as to create trauma, then the narratives themselves are traumatic. If we are given partial answers or even full answers with more questions (per my analysis of *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *Colorless Tsukuru Tazaki and his Years of Pilgrimage*) then the partial or full revelation of these answers comes at a shock (either a violent answer in the case of *Colorless*, or sudden one in the case of *Sputnik)*. This shock for Boulter *is* violent. I see this as well, and yet I see the equivocation of the answers to the questions of the text as resonating a particular trauma affect onto the readers since Murakami, and Yeung, sees his job as to connect readers to the story and its characters. As previously mentioned, Caruth represents trauma as being unconscious[60] and being "a truth that…cannot fully [be] know[n]"[61]. Caruth even says that

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[58] Boulter, J. (2011), *Melancholy and the Archive,* Page 60
[59] Boulter, J. (2011), *Melancholy and the Archive,* Page 60 (Emphasis Boulter's)
[60] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience,* Page 2
[61] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience,* Page 3

"literature…is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing."[62] This point further ties trauma with truth and knowingness, that Boulter is putting particular emphasis on with Murakami. Caruth again states that "trauma seems to be much more than a pathology, or a simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language." [63] This again puts emphasis on how we come to understand truth in relation to trauma, or that was is important, or is the purpose of trauma is to try to understand the reality or truth of it, even though the reality may be distorted (i.e. magical realism, and fragmented narrative structure) or that the truth is hidden (i.e. lack of closure, and Heidegger and Lacan seeing truth as coming out violently).

So, what does this discourse about trauma, violence, meaning, and truth mean for each of the specific texts of Murakami? Sure, one can go back and flip through every reference, connection, and clue that Murakami has within the texts, but does that necessarily matter? If Murakami's literary project is to explicate trauma (per Boulter and myself) as part of a way to describe the unconscious (per Stretcher and Manuel), via metaphor (per Manuel and Charles) narrative structure and the genre of magical realism (per this thesis) then does it really matter whether or not the reader finds meaning in Murakami's works? Does it matter that a reader needs to fully grasp and understand the story? My conclusion is no, because if the project is to tell stories without clear endings, without clear answers, without conclusions (per Murakami), then why look for a meaning? If Murakami is using writing to create a meditation on trauma, then that

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[62] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 3
[63] Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience*, Page 4

trauma has to be total and complete, by having fragmentation and a lack of closure. If trauma is "un-grasped", and without meaning, then why allow the stories to have meaning? The novels, short stories, and framed narratives are written without any proper indication that there would be a particular meaning or truth to them.

If we can look at closure as the reader's perception that the questions of the text have been answered, then we can also take into account the element of truth. Smith in her work *Poetic Closure* says that closure has a stability to it, specifically for her it is in poetry, but I want to employ it here with narratives. One example of how a poem can reach a sense of closure is with a "sense of truth", that Smith says gives the text "*validity*, a quality that leaves him [the reader] with the feeling that what has just been said has the "conclusiveness," the settled finality, of apparently self-evident truth".[64] This connection to the truth as Smith characterizes it ties with Barthes' idea that the hermeneutic code gives the reader questions that need to be answered, and the answering of the hermeneutic code is a revealing of truth.

Truth, in relation to Murakami, is often something that his protagonists are searching for and is something that readers can experience. In revealing narratives and connections, or truths, to the reader allows them to parse together the subjugated stories that Murakami creates. However, if we reexamine Smith's idea of closure as having stability, Murakami's narratives structures and use of magical realism can be interpreted as creating instability for the readers and the characters to try to remedy.

During a speech Murakami gave when he accepted the Jerusalem Prize, he said

"by telling skillful lies - which is to say, by making up fictions that appear to be true - the novelist can bring a truth out to a new location and shine a new light on it. In most cases, it is virtually impossible to grasp a truth in its original form and depict it accurately. This is why we

[64] Smith, B. (1968) *Poetic Closure,* Page 152 (Emphasis Smith's)

try to grab its tail by luring the truth from its hiding place, transferring it to a fictional location, and replacing it with a fictional form. In order to accomplish this, however, we first have to clarify where the truth lies within us."[65]

This particular value of truth that Murakami holds also explains why there rarely any snares in his writing (truths that are deliberately ignored). Because if a truth is ignored there is no trauma, and in order to write trauma, one must write about truth. One reason why I believe Murakami focuses on trauma is in order to show a level of truth with the subjectivity of human beings. The truth about trauma is that it is subjective, personal, and deeply unsettling. A Freudian approach to getting rid of trauma is to tell a story, to move it from the unconscious to the conscious. In trying to describe and show trauma within characters, and try to explain the truth of it, one (reader or character) can start to try to understand it. While this connection exists, it seems to try to create conflict within the reader, in terms of how the reader begins to interpret the work, especially as Yeung points out that Murakami throws this responsibility onto the reader. Many scholars of trauma, including Caruth, and Bruner[66], see the benefit of overcoming trauma by telling a narrative, and while it may not have closure, it can allow the traumatized person to reinterpret the trauma faced. Again, Virginia Yeung states with the ending of *Sputnik Sweetheart* that her…

"…discussion suggests that these endings are deliberately elusive so that readers are drawn emotionally closer to the novel world towards the end. Without their conscious knowledge, readers are turned from passive agents to active participants in the process of story creation – the indefiniteness prompts them to configure the untold part of the story, and create their own interpretation, which is prone to being affected by their own past experience, cultural background and other factors that have shaped their view of life."[67]

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[65] *The Novelist in Wartime*

[66] See *The remembering self: construction and accuracy in the self-narrative*

[67] Yeung, V. (2013) *Equivocal Endings and the Theme of Love in Murakami Haruki's Love Stories*, Page 292

As Murakami stated, and that is evidence by Todorov with the fantastic and with what Yeung further articulates with closure, if the stories are creating a connection between the reader and the characters, which then leads to a responsibility for the reader, then it is there responsibility to interpret the stories, and to find the truth of the trauma that is experienced both by the characters in the stories, but also the trauma experienced by themselves.

I view Murakami's use of the truth and meaning in relation to trauma to be a way of showing that the individual is always in search of truth or meaning, but this is often futile. The trauma that the characters feel and the attempts, either by themselves or by the reader, to try to find meaning are in conflict. What Murakami does then is to try to show and explicate trauma narratively and effectually to give readers the ability to piece together their own meaning of the text and trauma.

Conclusion

"And you really will have to make it through that violent, metaphysical, symbolic storm. No matter how metaphysical or symbolic it might be, make no mistake about it: it will cut through flesh like a thousand razor blades. People will bleed there, and ***you will bleed too****."*
Haruki Murakami, Kafka on the Shore[68]

Trauma; the subjective experience of an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. What Murakami is able to do with language, narrative structure, genre, and closure is award-winning, and deserving of this deep analysis that I have conducted, as well as for all of those in the English-speaking world invested in Murakami studies.

As demonstrated, the theme of trauma occurs throughout the works of Murakami, both inside the narrative, but also narratively in how the texts are structured. The trauma felt by the characters draws readers closer to it, which is often represented in the fantastic elements, or in its classification as magical realism. This trauma is then reciprocated in the lack of closure characters experience, but also in affect towards the readers once they realize the story is over and there are little to no answers to the questions that sprouted from the text. This ownership and connection to the reader thus creates an agency for the reader to try to understand and find meaning in the texts, and try to best understand the trauma experienced, but this is often a futile attempt. The stories told by Murakami try to get at the truth of what it means to be human, what it means to feel loneliness, depression, anxiety, fear, often times in a repetitive state governed by strange phenomenal forces beyond reality, and often within the depths of the unconscious;

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[68] Murakami, H. (2005) *Kafka on the Shore*, Page 5-6 (Emphasis mine)

trauma. Yet, there is a level of subjectivity to how the story of trauma is told, how the narrative is focalized, what the trauma is, if it is traumatic, and, most importantly, and how we make sense or meaning of the trauma. The subjectivity of trauma and the teleological functions of it are at the core of the narratives of Haruki Murakami.

Murakami often explores this subjectivity with a clear focus to understand trauma as it is, how it unfolds, and the effects that occur to both readers and characters. Murakami narratives uncover the strange and magical workings of trauma through fantastic experiences, deep symbolism, unconventional narrative structures, and teleological implications. Murakami's mythic narratives range from a colorless man, vanishing women, talking cats, and oedipal prophecies while following characters as they handle trauma and go through traumatic experiences, but they also create trauma for readers as well via unanswered questions. Teleology, or the lack thereof, may hold more to understanding traumatic narratives than what might seem evident. The teleological function, I want to propose, of Murakami's texts are to try to give voice to the human being and their inner psyche, to show the unconscious self in all of its strangeness, which is what makes us human. Often times, at the heart of the unconscious, is the Jungian shadow, the dark parts of ourselves. Murakami is trying to bring light to the shadow, truth to the lies, and meaning to the meaningless – trauma. Again, if Murakami is trying to show trauma, he is also trying to create it narratively; his works are not just about trauma but *are traumatic*.

The work of this thesis only goes so far. As to the impact of trauma studies, I believe I have been successful in articulating trauma through narratives and has used psychoanalytic methods to do so, thus contributing to the field. But as to the impact on the state of where Murakami studies should go is quite evident from my work. I believe that Murakami studies should continue to grow and thrive as the complex usage and allusions to philosophy, critical

theory, psychoanalysis, and the human condition allows for beautiful and haunting narratives that are both entertaining and edifying. Murakami and his literature should be further explored, either with a continuing use of trauma, or through the various other methods and topics I have used (magical realism, narrative structure, closure, hermeneutics, and interpretation), and further building off of the work done by Murakami studies scholars including Matthew Carl Stretcher, Jonathan Boulter, Virginia Yeung, and most important to this thesis, Jessica Manuel, who is trying to make Murakami studies more well known in the online communities she has created and into which I have joined.

Murakami writes

> "And you really will have to make it through that *violent, metaphysical, symbolic* storm. No matter how metaphysical or symbolic it might be, make no mistake about it: it will cut through flesh like a thousand razor blades. People will bleed there, and *you will bleed too.* Hot, red blood. You'll catch that blood in your hands, your own blood and the blood of others.
>
> And once the storm is over you won't *remember* how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure in fact, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm *you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about.*"[69]

The storms Murakami creates – A Rat becoming a Sheep Man, hiding in a hotel created by advanced capitalism, a man losing his mind and his shadow, and many others having been broken, and split from their shadows, women disappearing, exploring Japan at night, having affairs, falling in love while falling apart, and men losing themselves and their loved ones – are deeply violent, symbolic, metaphysical and traumatic. Yet, these storms cut us to our core selves, to our unconscious. We won't be the same after reading the trauma narrated in Murakami's texts, and experiencing the trauma ourselves, all while Murakami tries to examine the human condition in postmodern Japan and how we confront trauma.

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[69] Murakami, H. (2005) *Kafka on the Shore*, Page 5-6 (Emphasis mine)

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